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Hearkening to J E S U S.

A
DISCOURSE

ON
MATTHEW, xvii. 5.

By THOMAS WALSH.



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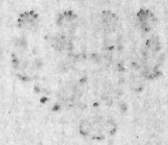
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DISCOURSE

BY THOMAS WALSH



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Hearkening to JESUS.

A
DISCOURSE
ON

MATTHEW, xvii. 5.

Hear ye Him.

1. **T**HE LORD thy God, said *Moses*, to the Children of *Israel*, will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the Midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto Me, unto Him ye shall hearken, *Deut.* xviii. 15. The LORD confirms the Words of his Servant, and commands all to hearken to his Son ; to Him who spake, as never Man spake. Grace was poured into his Lips, and dwelt in his Heart without Measure. Tho' our Saviour was in the Form of a Servant in this World, yet He gave many miraculous and undeniable Proofs, of his eternal Power and God-head. The Context affords us the sacred History of our LORD's Transfiguration, which eminently display'd, that He was the LORD from Heaven ; that Prophet whom we are bound to hear in all Things, whatsoever He commands us.

2. In the foregoing Chapter, he told his Disciples, that He must go to *Jerusalem*, and suffer many Things of the Elders, and Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed. This greatly affected them; Sorrow immediately filled their Hearts; and *Peter* (being forward on every Occasion) took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Master." But O, how much Ignorance, and Self, was in this Rebuke! How little did *Peter* consider, that it behoved CHRIST to suffer; since otherwise we must have perished everlastingly! But the compassionate JESUS, to comfort and encourage them, "After six Days, took *Peter*, and *James*, and *John* his Brother, and brought them up into an high Mountain apart; and was transfigured (or transformed) before them. And his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light. And behold there appeared unto them *Moses*, and *Elias*, talking with Him. Then answered *Peter*, and said unto JESUS, LORD it is good for us to be here! If Thou wilt, let us make three Tabernacles. One for Thee, and one for *Moses*, and one for *Elias*. While he yet spake, behold a bright Cloud over-shadowed them, and a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him!" And thus was shewn, who He was, even the Son of GOD.

3. Our LORD now manifested a Part of the Glory, which He had with the Father, before the World began, sufficient to convince the Disciples, that all Power in Heaven and Earth, was in his Hands; and that therefore, his Suffering and Death, which not long before, He mentioned to them, should be

voluntary, of his own Choice, the Effect of infinite Love ! To confirm the Apostles still more, the Father speaks, as above, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, *Hear ye HIM !* ” Hear Him in all Things. He is God, All-sufficient ! JESUS, JEHOVAH, over all, blessed for ever ! He is Wise, and Great, and Good ! He will neither say, or command ought, but what is Holy, Just, and Good. Therefore, *Hear ye Him !*

4. BUT CHRIST is now in Heaven : we shall see Him no more, in his human Form (with our bodily Eyes) till He appears on *the great, white Throne !* to judge the World in Righteousness. How then can we hearken to Him ? Can we ascend into Heaven, to bring Him down from above ? To hear Him utter from his gracious Lips, the Words of eternal Life ? This need not be : Lo, the Word is nigh thee. Whatsoever was written, by the holy Men of old Time, was written for our Learning ; and if CHRIST Himself, was again to return to Earth, He would not alter his Speech, or preach any other Gospel, than that He has left us. We hear Him in his Word, in our Hearts, and by his Ministers. Who so heareth and receiveth these, hear and receive CHRIST, that sent them.

5. The Design of this Discourse, is to enforce the divine Command, *Hear ye Him.* In order to which, I shall speak to four Classes of People ; and exhort them to hear what CHRIST, in his holy Word saith to them. Namely,

I. To those who are dead in Trespases and Sins, and yet are at Ease in Sion.

II. To those who are of a poor and contrite Spirit, and tremble at God's Word.

III. To such as have tasted that the LORD is gracious, having the Knowledge of Salvation, by the Remission of their Sins.

IV. To those who once ran well, but whom *Satan* has hindred : that is, Backsliders.

I. 1. And first, I am to speak to those who are dead in Trespases and Sins, and yet are at Ease in Sion. And O, that the Almighty would apply his Word to your Hearts ! Take Knowledge then, ye Sinners against your own Souls, that ye are Strangers to God, having your Understanding darkened, thro' the Blindness of your Hearts. Ye are Enemies to Him, in your Mind, and by wicked Works. The Word of God pronounces concerning all Flesh, that we are altogether born in Sin, dead and blind, corrupt and abominable ; that we are Atheists in the World. " Ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers," was the Word of CHRIST to the Pharisees, and is still his Word to all impenitent Sinners. Wo, saith the LORD, to them that are at Ease in Sion ! Awake then, O thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead !

2. You are not only ignorant of, and Enemies to God, without Righteousness, or Holiness ; but you are likewise without strength, to help and restore
your

yourselves. As well might the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, as you can, of yourselves, turn unto the LORD and live. You are sick unto Death ; yet there is no Medicine in thy Power, to heal thy Sickness ; that is, none which thou canst purchase by thy Righteousness. You have nothing to pay (O, that you were but sensible of this !) You are guilty, and can in no wise vindicate yourself. Could *Naaman* cure his own Leprosy ? Could *Lazarus* raise himself to Life ? Or *Bartimeus* open his blind Eyes ? You know they could not : neither can a dead Sinner quicken, enlighten, or heal his own Soul. Sinner, know this : and then, O then, take Knowledge, that there is Help laid upon *One that is mighty !* There is *Balm in Gilead ;* there is a *Physician there !*

3. HEAR the LORD speaking, concerning what you deserve. And it is no less than Hell fire. “ The Soul that sinneth shall die. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things, that are written in the Book of the Law to do them. The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men. Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doeth Evil. He that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption.”

4. HE still farther declares, that except ye repent, ye shall all perish. You have not only deserved Damnation, but will surely be damned, unless you cast away your Transgressions. You must *kiss the Son ;* become the Friend and favourite of JESUS, else the Father's Wrath will consume thee eternally ; yea
though

though it be kindled but a little, *The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the People that forget God.*

5. HEAR him calling upon you to repent. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways, for Why will ye die, O House of Israel ! Rent your Hearts and not (that is, rather than) your Garments, and turn to the Lord your God. Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let them return unto the LORD, for he will have Mercy upon them, and unto our GOD, for he will abundantly pardon."

6. HEAR the LORD encouraging you, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Yes, though you are a Sinner, a great Sinner, a stubborn Sinner, an old Sinner, having your Bones full of the Sins of your Youth ; yea, tho' thou mayest be an universal Sinner ; a Brand just fit for the burning, yet thy God calleth Thee ! He encourageth thee, saying, "All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men." *All Manner* ; O Words of greatest Mercy, Sweetness, and Encouragement ! *All Manner* of Uncleaness, Idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, Lying, Adultery, Fornication ; *All Manner* of Hell-deservingness, shall be forgiven every poor, penitent Believer in CHRIST. The Blood of JESUS, can make thee white as Snow.

II. 1. *Hear Him*, all ye that feel your Guilt and Misery. His Thoughts and Words concerning you, are all Mercy and Compassion. "Unto that Man will I look, saith the Lord (i. e. him will I regard and relieve,) who is of a contrite Spirit, and that trem-

trembles at my Word." Yes, the LORD healeth those that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit. *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit*; that is, all who *feel* themselves Sinners, who sustain a Sore and a heavy Burthen, and are pained to be delivered; who feel they have nothing to pay, and who esteem their own Righteousness as filthy Rags; the Language of whose Heart is, "Lord, we are poor, blind and needy Creatures; we have not so much as a Mite, towards the Ransom of our Souls from everlasting Perdition; we must be saved by free Grace, or perish everlastingly!" Such are the poor in Spirit, whom CHRIST has pronounced blessed; *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*. Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy shall fill their Hearts; and because they have nothing to pay, he will frankly forgive them all. Their Sins shall not be so much as remembered against them.

O ye trembling, burthen'd, Sin-sick Souls, the LORD, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his Temple! The Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon you, with healing in his Wings; for surely you fear his Name. His Salvation is nigh them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our Land. He will ever be mindful of his Covenant. The LORD will brake your Bonds in sunder. The Son shall make you free, and you shall be free indeed. You shall receive of his Fulness, and Grace for Grace. JESUS CHRIST came to preach the Gospel to the Poor, to bind up the broken in Heart, to preach Deliverance to the Captives, and Recovery of Sight to the Blind; to comfort all that mourn. They that go forth weeping, bearing precious Seed, shall return with Joy, bringing their Sheaves with them.

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They that sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy. "I, saith the LORD, will appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, Beauty for Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garments of Praise, for the Spirit of Heaviness. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you. You shall return to Sion with Joy and Gladness; Sorrow and Sighing shall be for ever done away, and everlasting Glory shall rest upon you!"

2. YET again, I say *Hear Him*, all ye that mourn, and refuse to be comforted, till you find JESUS. Your Sorrow shall not endure long: the God whom ye seek, will come and save you. Be not cast down. Why is your Soul disquieted within you! Trust in the Name of the LORD, for you shall yet praise Him, because of the Light of his Countenance. His Bowels yearn over you; your Tears are in his Bottle: tho' He hides his Face from you, as it were for a Moment, yet He will come, and receive you with everlasting Loving-kindness! O then, your Heart shall rejoice, and your Joy no Man shall take from you!

3. You hunger and thirst after Righteousness. And I, saith the LORD, will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground. I will pour out my Spirit upon you. Ho! Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; come, buy and eat; yea, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely. Eat, O Friends, and drink; yea drink abundantly, O beloved. Eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight itself in Fatness, All Things

Things are ready ; there is bread enough, and to spare, for you all ! “ Come unto Me,” saith CHRIST. And again, “ Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out. He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth in Me, shall never thirst ; for the Water that I will give him, shall be in him a Fountain of living Water, springing up into everlasting Life.” Ye shall be filled ; ye shall be satisfied, as with Marrow and Fatness ; yea, with all the Fulness of God ! His Love shall fill the whole Capacity of your Soul. The Time of Refreshing shall come from the Presence of the LORD ; and then with Joy shall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation.

“ Come then, ye Souls by Sin oppressd,
Ye restless Wand’ers after Rest,
Ye poor and maim’d, and halt and blind,
In CHRIST a hearty Welcome find !

JESUS to you his Fulness brings,
A Feast of Marrow, and fat Things :
All, all in CHRIST, is freely given,
Pardon, and Holiness, and Heaven ! ”

4. O, How graciously does He cry to you, that are weary, and heavy-laden, “ Come unto Me, and I will give you Rest ; ” Rest from the Guilt, the Power, and the Punishment of Sin. All these gracious Declarations, Encouragements, and Invitations, are address’d to you, that are of a penitent, and weary Spirit. And such are all those, who 1. Are stript of Self-sufficiency. 2. Mourn for God. 3. Hunger and thirst after CHRIST, and his Righteousness. These are not far from the Kingdom of God. The Time of your Redemption is at Hand.

O,

O, hear JESUS, pronouncing concerning thee, *Thy Sins are forgiven!* "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own Name's Sake." Now, believest thou this? If you read over the whole Book of GOD, there is nothing to be found, but great and precious Promises, to penitent Sinners; as on the other hand, all the Curses, Woes, and Threatenings in the Bible, are against impenitent Sinners, Scribes, Pharisees, and Hypocrites; who cover themselves with their own Righteousness; are rich in their own Conceit, encreased with Goods, and think they have need of nothing. There is not in the whole Book of GOD, one Intimation of Comfort for Persons of this Character.

BUT O, ye afflicted Ones! CHRIST has good Words, and comfortable for you. Believe in Him, for the Remission of your Sins. Behold Him! Behold Him! He presents, and offers Pardon to thee, even now. Embrace the Promises. Hope against Hope. Hear the Words of eternal Life! Speak LORD! Command the Light to shine. We wait for the *small still Voice*, that whispers all our Sins forgiven. O that the Hour was now come! O that we could but believe! LORD, help my Unbelief! I would fain draw near unto Thee! Thou hast spoken with a mighty Voice, and we have heard Thee: O speak again; speak the Life-giving Word into my poor Soul! We cry out of the Deeps. Thou sayest *Come!* LORD, we come unto Thee! Take and seat us for thine own. Fulfil thy Word in us; wash us, and we shall be clean; we shall have Part with Thee!

III. 1. As for those who have tasted that the LORD is gracious; to whom, in the third Place, we consider CHRIST as speaking. *Hear Him* describe your State. 1. Your Sins are forgiven, *Jer. xxxi, 33.* The Anger of God is turned away from you, *Jf. xii. 1.* Nothing can be laid to your Charge; for there is no Condemnation to those that are in CHRIST JESUS, *Rom. viii. 1.* The Love of God is shed abroad in your Heart, by the Holy Ghost, given unto you, *Rom. v. 5.* Yea, your very Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor. vi. 19.* Ye have received not the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The same Spirit beareth Witness with your Spirit, that ye are the Children of God, *Rom. viii.* Those who believe in the Name of CHRIST, receive Power to become the Sons of God, *John i. 12.* In short, you are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, *1 Pet. ii. 9.* These are the Persons whom CHRIST means by his Sheep, *John x. 14.* And thus we find true Believers described in Scripture: they are the Light of the World; the Glory of the whole Earth.

2. *Hear Him* exhorting you to Obedience. "Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven, *Matt. v. 16.* God hath called you to Holiness. Be ye therefore holy, as He that hath called you is holy, in all manner of Conversation. Whatsoever ye do, do it with your Might, unto the LORD. Keep your Heart with all Diligence. Let your Conversation be in Grace, as becometh the Gospel of CHRIST. Do justly, love

Mercy, and walk humbly with your God. By patient Continuance in Well-doing, seek for Honour, and Glory, and Immortality. O pray always, and do not faint. Watch diligently; read humbly; hear attentively; communicate reverently; deny yourself daily; be ready every Moment, to take up your Cross, and follow JESUS, to Stripes, to Prison, and to Death! Give up thy Soul, thy Body, thy Time, thy Substance to the LORD. He is the Author of eternal Salvation to all who thus obey Him.

3. Hear his Promises. “ I know my Sheep, and am known of mine; and I will give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismay’d, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness. No Weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” You shall go thro’ the Fire, and it shall not burn thee, and thro’ the Floods, and they shall not drown thee. For the LORD GOD is a Sun, and a Shield. He is faithful, and has promised not to suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear; but will, with the Temptation, make a Way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. In the World indeed, you must expect Tribulation; but in CHRIST you shall have Peace. Underneath you are the everlasting Arms. The GOD of *Jacob* is the Strength of his Children’s Salvation.

THESE are a few of the *precious Promises*, which CHRIST has made, to obedient Believers. Against these, the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail. The LORD will never leave nor forsake you; but will preserve you, by his mighty Power, thro’ Faith, to eternal Salvation.

4. LASTLY, *Hear Him* concerning your everlasting Inheritance, "In my Father's House are many Mansions : I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go; and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And further, "I will be thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward." He will with-hold no Manner of Thing that is Good, from his upright Servants. Grace and Glory, the unsearchable Riches of CHRIST, *all* is yours. All Holiness, and all Happiness ; all Heaven is yours ! God is your Father, *2 Cor. vi.* CHRIST is your Brother, *Heb. ii.* The Holy Ghost is your Comforter, *John xvi.* The Church is your Mother, *Pf. xlv.* The Ministers of CHRIST are your Servants, *1 Cor. iii.* The Angels of God are your Guardians, *Heb. i.* Heaven is your Inheritance, *Heb. xi.* *1 Pet. i.* and you shall shortly be there ! O then, you shall hunger no more, neither shall ye thirst any more ; but the Lamb, which is in the Midst of the Throne, shall lead you to Fountains of living Waters, and GOD shall wipe away all Tears from your Eyes. You shall be remembered when the LORD maketh up his Jewels !

IV. 1. *Hear Him*, in the last Place, ye Backsliding Children. Thus saith the LORD, "If any Man draw back, my Soul hath no Pleasure in him." It were better never to know the Way of Righteousness, than after one has known it, to turn his Back to the holy Commandment, delivered unto him. If he that despised *Moses's* Law, dyed without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses ; Of how much sorer Punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath

hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing ; thus doing Des-pight to the Spirit of Grace ? He that knowing his Masters Will, doeth it not, deserves to be beaten with many Stripes. Alas ! Are you not twice dead ? Withered Branches, who have grieved and tempted the Spirit of the LORD, causing him to depart from you ? You once ran well ; but have been hindered, you have turned again to Folly. Wherefore your second State is worse than the first.

2. YET once again, O ye Backsliders, Hear the LORD's Counsel, " Remember from whence you are fallen, and Repent, and do the first Works." Consider How it has been with you in Days that are past ; what Faith, and Joy, and Peace and Love, you once enjoyed, while the Candle of the LORD shone upon your Head, and your Goings were directed by his Eye. O repent of your Fall. Be afflicted and mourn, and do not rest till the LORD speaks again to your Heart, " Be of good Courage, I am merciful to thine Iniquity ; I do not condemn Thee !"

3. AND, for your Encouragement, Hear what the LORD saith, " I will heal their Backslidings, I will love them freely." Christ hath purchased, and bestows Gifts upon the Rebellious : even upon such as once fought under his Banner, against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, but have now deserted Him. Only take with you Words and return. Acknowledge your Perfidy, and vow Allegiance to your rightful LORD. Determine rather to dye the most afflictive, shameful Death, than flinch from Him
any

any more. So will thy merciful LORD receive thee graciously, and upbraid thee not.

4. But shouldst thou still harden thyself in thy Folly, and refuse to return and repent, of thy treacherous Dealing ; O take Heed lest he purpose in his Displeasure, “ My Spirit shall no more strive with thee.” Unless thou repentest, he will remove the Candlestick from thee ; and perhaps leave thee only a fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries of the LORD. He will take the Word of his Truth utterly away from thee, and leave thee to the Hardness and Insensibility of a wretched revolting Heart. O take Heed ! Do not crucify afresh the LORD of Glory, nor put Him, any longer to an open Shame !

5. As for you, who are disconsolate ; being sensibly touched with a Feeling of your deep Wants ; to you I preach CHRIST *crucified* ! I preach Him an instant Saviour. Now behold the Lamb of God ! I beseech you to come to Him. He is gracious, and willing to receive you. His Heart is full of Compassion, and his Arms are open, to accept and embrace you all ! O be not unbelieving ; venture your Souls upon Him. Put the LORD to it. Plead the Promises. God, by his own Word, has engaged Himself to have Mercy upon you. For tho’ you have followed after many Lovers, yet “ Return unto Me, saith the LORD, and I will have Mercy upon you.”

O, but you may say, “ We are not yet humble enough ; we have not shed Tears, nor pray’d enough

nough." Would to God you were more humble, and that you could weep and pray much more abundantly: But still, remember, this is not the Cause of your Justification, in Whole, nor in Part. No, if you trust in these, or in any Thing you can possibly do or suffer, you lay another Foundation, than CHRIST, and the Scriptures affirm, " Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that which is laid, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST." Whosoever thou art, that feelest thy Sins a sore Burthen, and earnestly desirest CHRIST to be thy Saviour; know that Faith alone, is required of thee, in order to thy Acceptance with God. If thou hast nothing to pay; if thou hast no Dependance on thyself, or any other Creature, or Thing; then come to CHRIST; He will frankly forgive you all. O, come to your LORD! Come, poor, destitute, forsaken, and forlorn as thou art; He will, He will receive thee!

" His Love is mighty to compell!
 His conqu'ring Love vouchsafe to feel,
 Yield to his Love's resistless Pow'r,
 And fight against your God no more!

Come to Him now; throw yourself into his Arms! Say unto Him—" Here am I, LORD, a vile, backsliding Sinner. I have grieved thy Spirit, wounded my Conscience, and constrained Thee to depart from me! All my Nature is unclean, is Sin! I am full of every Evil; neither have I Power to turn to Thee. I well know all my Prayers, Tears, Groans, and Cries, cannot save me: but O, my God, my Saviour! I come to Thee, to receive thy free and undeserved Mercy. I ask Forgiveness

in

in the Name of CHRIST ! cast my Soul upon the Merits of his Passion ! LORD JESUS, save, O save a lost Sinner, that flies to thy Breast ! Enable me to believe in Thee. Help me to lay hold on the Promises. Apply thy Blood to my wounded Spirit ! Ah, thou Friend of Sinners, look upon a Criminal at thy Throne of Grace ! Make this to me a Time of Love ! Put upon me the Garments of Salvation, the Robe of Righteousness ; and let me go away rejoicing and praising God ! ”

As for you, who are Believers in CHRIST. Ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and know all Things. You are hereby taught what Manner of Persons ye ought to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness. Yet I stir up your pure Minds, by way of Remembrance. O consider what God has done for, and in you, and be thankful. Weigh well the Duties He requires of you, and be exact in the Performance of them. Do the Will of God from the Heart. Be obedient in all Things. Still behold the Joy, the Glory that is set before you, and be encourag'd to press forwards. There is laid up for you in Heaven an exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory ! Wherefore comfort yourselves, with these Things.